



OFFICE OF THE GENERAL MANAGER

12 SPRING STREET, SYDNEY
BOX 7000 G.P.O. PHONE 20544
TELEGRAMS "TELECOM" SYDNEY
TELEX AA20591
IN REPLY PLEASE QUOTE:

20th May, 1966

Dear Fred:

Many thanks for the good wishes expressed in your letter of 27th April, it was nice to hear from you.

... Your understanding that the first Pacific cable opened for traffic on 7th December, 1902, is quite correct, and enclosed is a statement setting out the answers to your other queries.

If there is anything else you would like to know, please don't hesitate to get in touch with me again.

Hoping to see you before too long.

Yours sincerely,


(H. WHITE)

Mr. F. Stevens,
2, Kyarra Road,
GLEN IRIS, S.E. 6. VIC.

QUERY: Where in British Columbia?

(1) Did it extend to Australia then, if not, when?

A. The cable was landed at Bamfield, Vancouver Island, site of the cable station.

(2) Was Fiji in fact Suva?

A. The cable was landed at Suva, Fiji, site of the cable station.

(3) Was the final route B. C.-Fanning Island-Suva-Norfolk Island-Southport?

A. Route of the 1902 Pacific cable was Bamfield, Vancouver Island-Fanning-Suva; at Suva the cable branched --

(a) Suva-New Zealand;

(b) Suva-Norfolk Island-Southport, Qld.

(4) Where on Fanning Island is (was) Nabari the cable settlement?

A. The cable station was on the west coast of Fanning Island (which measures approximately 4 miles by 7 miles).

(5) When did the old telegraph cable finally cease to carry traffic?

A. The cable ceased to carry traffic in December, 1963 (coincident with the opening of the Commonwealth Pacific coaxial cable, COMPAC).

(6) Any notes of historical interest apart from those indicated above?

A. See copy attached of general information brochure. As much of the cable lay within the interests of Cable and Wireless, Limited, it might be helpful to write to Mr. George Joyce, Public Relations Officer of C&W.

Further to (1) above, the cable did extend to Australia.



2 May 1966

Pipe-puffing senior technician Douglas Lloyd tests the Morse key at the control console.

'Ears' over the sea

On the windswept meadows that roll down to the cliffs and the ocean at Cape Schanck, an unpretentious pink-brick building has appeared.

Inside, brilliant fluorescent light floods pastel-shaded walls, and there are blue, yellow, green and red lights instead of pictures.

Men in grey dustcoats move about in the air-conditioned interior, bending over long banks of switches and dials.

Outside in the salty wind, sheep graze, close to two clumps of radio masts, the tallest 150 ft. high.

It is the new \$340,000 Melbourne Radio, callsign VIM, that keeps watch over every radio-equipped vessel from Adelaide, through Tasmania, to Sydney, whether it be a liner from London, a fishing boat from Flinders, or a launch from St. Leonards.

The new station goes on the air officially on June 3 when it takes over from the old Melbourne Radio which has its control console in the Overseas Telecommunications Commission office in Lonsdale St., City, its receivers at Rockbank and its transmitter at Fiskville, near Ballan.

These masts are 70 miles from the sea, and

the move right down to the clifftops means the elimination of "dead" areas around the coast.

Radio Melbourne is the telephone exchange for passing shipping traffic. It is their lifeline if they are in trouble.

For 24 hours a day there is a skilled operator at the control desk passing messages to and from the shore. At his right elbow there is a teleprinter with a direct link to the Australian telegraph circuits.

And in front of him are switches that can link up a telephone call from a ship in Victorian waters to anywhere in the world.

Diagnosis by radio

If a ship radios that a member of the crew is ill, the operator has a list of doctors he can switch through to the ship for a quick diagnosis and advice on whether the ship should make for port.

And at the flick of a switch he can summon lifeboats, tugs, aircraft, crashboats and nearby shipping if a vessel is in trouble.

Melbourne Radio is one of a chain of 24 radio stations that cover every mile of Australia's coast.

They are operated by the Overseas Telecom-

munications Commission, the Federal agency that controls all overseas radio and cable traffic (it's not the Post Office).

OTC has a big share in the planned communications satellite that will hover over the Pacific.

Last month the station handled 2460 paid messages, 119 service calls connected with these, 24 medical flashes, 55 navigation warnings (such as floating debris), and 226 weather forecasts.

Only last week it summoned a helicopter to the aid of a man injured aboard a vessel in Bass Strait. The details are secret, according to OTC.

When two men were swept overboard from the Glomar III drilling rig in July last year, Melbourne Radio picked up the emergency call.

Five radio operators who live in Rosebud will man the control console around the clock. Behind this console is an identical one which a high-ranking officer will use to direct rescues or help in other emergencies.

The five men will keep a watch on 14 different frequencies ranging from 410 to 535 kilocycles on the medium band, and 1.6 to 20 megacycles on the high frequency channels.

But the constant chatter of radio messages will be silenced when a SOS in morse is picked up — or a voice calls "Mayday"

through the loudspeakers.

In case a vessel is in trouble and it cannot make itself heard, the station keeps radio silence for three minutes twice every hour — a quarter past, and a quarter to.

The silent segments are marked in red on the electric clock in front of the operator.

The station has an emergency generator. Last week the S.E.C. power was cut off to simulate a breakdown — and the generator had power back in seven seconds.

Link with history

The new transistorised, two kilowatt station has a link with Australia's radio history.

Commissioning of the station and overseeing the installation of its complex equipment is being done by 62-year-old Mr Bill Jenvey, who was summoned out of retirement for the job. He had been, until July 1964, OTC's chief engineer.

His father, Mr H. W. Jenvey, was the first man to make an overseas telegraph message from Australia. In 1901 from Point Lonsdale, he contacted the HMS St. George escorting the Duke of York (who became George V) on his way to Australia aboard the Ophir.

4 June 1966

MR. BILL JENVY, former chief engineer of OTC, has a picture of his father, Mr. H. W. Jenvy, at his side as he taps out the first morse code message from the new OTC station at Cape Schanck yesterday.



Firsts recorded by father and son

THERE was an historical link with the first shore to ship wireless telegraphy message sent in Australia at the opening of the new Overseas Telecommunications Commission's coastal radio station at Cape Schanck yesterday.

The former chief engineer of OTC (Mr. Bill Jenvy), who came out of retirement to commission the new station, is the son of the late Mr. H. W. Jenvy, who sent the first message in May, 1901.

The occasion was the visit of the then Duke and Duchess of York to Melbourne for the Declaration of Federation.

The citizens decided the

new wonder of wireless telegraphy would be a fitting way to welcome the Royal visitors.

Mr. Jenvy, who was chief electrician with the PMG's department, made his own equipment to send the message.

He first thought he would put up his aerial with a balloon, but when this proved impracticable he used the masthead near the Queenscliff lighthouse.

The Postmaster-General (Mr. Hulme), when he opened the Cape Schanck station yesterday said that from its beginning radio had been the lifeline of all ships at sea and aircraft in the skies.

He said Australia, in common with all countries throughout the world, operated a chain of coastal radio stations for the benefit of all types of shipping and aircraft.



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12 SPRING STREET, SYDNEY
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TELEGRAMS "TELECOM" SYDNEY
TELEX AA20591
IN REPLY PLEASE QUOTE:

8th June, 1966

Dear Fred:

Further to your letter of 23rd May,
I was very pleased to be able to provide the
information which you apparently found useful.

In your letter you refer to ship-shore
communications in Victoria in May, 1901, as
being the first of its kind and, incidentally, the
name should be spelt "Jenvey" not "Jenvy"
as you have it. My experts inform me that it
has now been found that this is not the case.
Apparently the first successful radiocommunicat-
ion between ship at sea and an Australian coastal
station was in 1900 when the Queensland gunboat,
"GAYUNDAH" exchanged signals with the Naval
stores depot at Kangaroo Point, Brisbane.

Kindest regards, and keep well,

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be "H. J. Smith", written over a light blue horizontal line.

Mr. F. Stevens,
2, Kyarra Road,
GLEN IRIS, SE. 6. VIC.



Ref. No. 32/52/132.

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

TELEPHONES:

69-0440 NAVAL BRANCHES, VICTORIA BARRACKS,
ST. KILDA ROAD

94-0101 NAVAL BARRACKS, ALBERT PARK
BARRACKS

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY,
VICTORIA BARRACKS,
MELBOURNE, S.C.I

4th July 1966.

Dear Sir,

With reference to your letter of 23rd June, 1966, concerning the first ship to shore wireless communication in Australian waters, I desire to inform you that there appears to be a conflict of opinion between historical authorities concerning the correct date on which H.M.Q.S. GAYUNDAH first exchanged wireless signals with the Naval Stores Depot at Kangaroo Point, Brisbane. Some authorities quote the year 1900 while others quote 1903. However, on your behalf, I will arrange to have GAYUNDAH's Log Books examined to establish the factual date of this interesting event in the history of wireless communication in Australia and advise you of the result as soon as possible.

Records of the Queensland Marine Defence Force are not held in this office and consequently I am unable to state when the Stores Depot at Kangaroo Point was first built. I will make enquiries and forward any information available.

Yours faithfully,

J Ware

Registrar.

Mr. F.W. Stevens,
2 Kyarra Road,
GLEN IRIS, S.E.6.



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BARRACKS

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY,
VICTORIA BARRACKS,
MELBOURNE, S.C.I

13 July 1966

Dear Sir,

Further to my letter of 4th July, 1966, I have to inform you that examination of the Log Books of H.M.Q.S. GAYUNDAH for years 1900-01 has revealed no reference to any wireless experiments. It is therefore assumed that the year 1900 quoted by the Overseas Telecommunications Commission is an error.

It is noted that Commander N.S. Pixley, M.B.E., R.A.N.R., quotes the year 1903 as the year of the experiments in his book "History of the Queensland Marine Defence Force" but gives no source. Unfortunately the Logs for the year 1903 are not available, however, I will seek the authority for Commander Pixley's statement at the first opportunity.

For your information, a Naval Stores Depot was first established at Kangaroo Point in 1887.

Yours faithfully,

J Ware

Acting Registrar.

Mr. F.W. Stevens,
2 Kyarra Road,
GLEN IRIS, E.6. VIC.